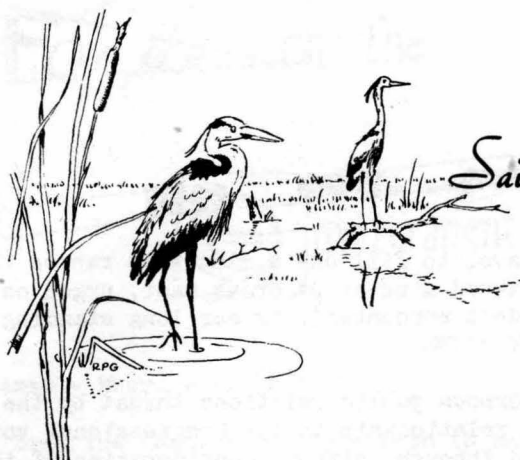




Saint Louis Audubon

Bulletin

Volume 40 Number 2

September, 1973

1973-74 WILDLIFE FILM SERIES

The Saint Louis Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society will again offer the Wildlife Film Series free of charge to the general public. The first film, The Land No One Wanted, presented by Lyle K. Moss, will be shown on Friday, September 28. Other films and dates in the series are as follows: On the Trail of the Arctic Char, Peter Maslowski, October 19; Florida's Cypress Sanctuary - Fish Eating Creek, Richard Kern, November 16; Galapagos, Martin Bruce, February 1; Grass Roots, Fran William Hall, March 8.

Folders giving more details about the photographer-naturalists and their films will be mailed soon. Mark your calendar now with the dates (all Fridays) and time (8:15) and place (Ethical Society of St. Louis, 9001 Clayton Road.) Last year with the move to this more convenient location we had full houses for several of the programs. Another feature of which our members may not be aware is that the driveways have heating units which keep them free of snow during the winter.

It was our organization under the leadership of Wayne Short which inaugurated the Screen Tours thirty-one years ago. Once again schools will be given the opportunity to hear these outstanding speakers while they are in town.



FALL NATURE OUTING AND WORKSHOPS AT SUNNY RANCH

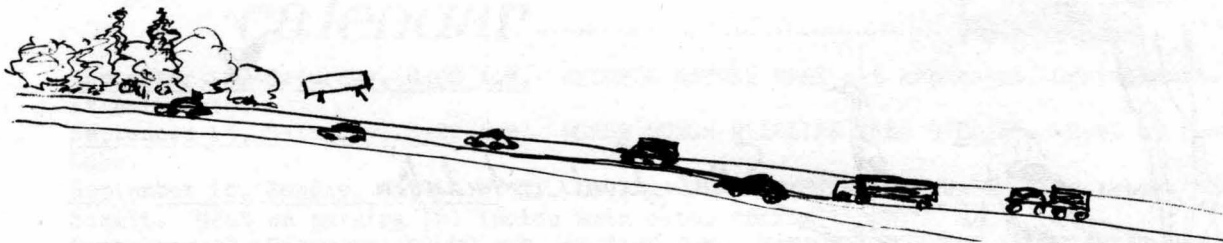
Good news for those who accepted the gracious invitation of Ruby and Burrell Pickering last spring as well as for those who were unable to be there. The Pickerings have invited us to enjoy an autumn day at Sunny Ranch on Sunday, September 30th. Experienced leaders will be available for nature workshops in such fields as: Pond Life, Birds, Wildflowers, Trees, Mushrooms and Insects. For those who prefer to be on their own, the beautiful well marked trails are easy to follow and the Nature Museum will be open. Bring your family and friends and your own food and come and join us there.

Directions to Sunny Ranch: Interstate 70 to Foristell which is 32 miles from Lindbergh. Turn left (south) to overpass and follow highway T for 5 miles to intersection with highway M. Turn right on M for $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to highway O. Turn left on O for two miles. Ranch is on left side of road, red metal gate, sign on pole, house set back $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from gate.

We care



we use recycled paper



There's nothing like a bit of cross country travel to fill one's mind with random thoughts as the miles click by. Here are a few that entered mine as we drove east, urged on despite warnings about gasoline shortages (which we didn't encounter), by our long standing love affair with the Green River in Massachusetts.

First: I became deeply suspicious that the enormous public relations thrust by the oil companies on the gasoline shortage somehow bore a relationship to the congressional vote on the Alaska Pipe Line. When that measure was rushed through, without consideration of the Canadian alternative and with a provision barring environmental suits, my suspicions turned to unhappy cynicism - a bad state of mind for a nature buff.

Second: I played the childhood license plate game again for the first time in years. Thirty-eight different states in one day was a satisfying score, but I don't bring this up as a bit of gamesmanship. Rather we were impressed that Missouri license plates are dull indeed compared to "New Mexico - Land of Enchantment" or "Louisiana - Sportsman's Paradise". So- why not "Missouri - the River State" or "Land of Great Rivers"? After all, Missouri had the first National River Park along the Current; we have many beautiful free flowing streams, even though all too often we destroy them with impoundments; and above all, we have the two greatest rivers, and their confluence.* Perhaps such a motto on our license plates would make us more conscious of our unique natural features - and more anxious to preserve them.

Third: I wondered once again why Missouri spends so much money on highway mowing and spraying when such a beautiful and less costly alternative is available. Texas, in particular, does a spectacular job of encouraging its native roadside wildflowers and publicizes them as a major tourist attraction. Such a wide variety may not be feasible here, but there are other possibilities. Ohio seems to specialize in purple crown vetch, and New York in yellow birds-foot clover. Along many miles of southern highway there is a handsome tall deep red clover. All of these form dense mats and should serve instead of the extensive mowing we do.

Anybody want to join a campaign for yet another cause!?

* See p. 6 for a statement in opposition to the L-15 levee made at a hearing at Portage des Sioux, July 19.

President

J. M. Magnier 961-4388
516 Bacon, 63119

Editor

Mary C. Wiese 965-2310
711 N. Taylor, 63122

The Audubon Society has an answering service with the Coalition for the Environment. The number is 727-2311.

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Mrs. Jay Rice
240 Blackmer Place
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Telephone 961-0895

The use of computers and zip codes changes procedures that we have advocated in the past. When you receive your renewal notice from National, please return the punch card with your check directly to National in the envelope provided. This should eliminate delays in receiving your magazine. (We allow some lag before removing you from our local mailings!)

Focus on the



Environment



Betty Wilson

Solid Waste - Where will it go?

We have been the land of plenty - both in natural resources and productive capacity. We have chosen convenience and quantity over conservation. Now we are beginning to face the consequences of depleting our natural resources and harming our environment.

A recent study by the National League of Cities and the United States Conference of Mayors, as reported by Conservation News, reveals some startling facts about our solid waste:

1. Nearly half our major cities will run out of places to dump trash within 5 years.
2. Urban areas accumulate an average annual trash pile of 250 million tons, including 28 billion bottles, 48 billion cans, millions of tons of plastic, 30 million tons of paper, 100 million tires and over 3 million junk cars.
3. Disposal costs 6 billion dollars a year.
4. 16 to 24% of the nation's solid waste is potentially recoverable and reusable.
5. The markets for recycled materials are severely limited by federal policies which favor the use of virgin materials and discourage, even penalize, the use of recycled materials.

The U. S. Senate Commerce Subcommittee on the Environment will continue its consideration of bills relating to solid waste management and resource recovery after the August recess. The chairman is Senator Philip A. Hart(D.) Three bills are being considered by this committee: S 1879 introduced by Senator Hart, S 1593 introduced by Senator Moss, S 1122 introduced by Senator Cook.

None of these bills would completely solve the problem of discrimination against the use of recycled materials. However, all three bills require the examination of transportation rates for recycled materials, the repeal of discriminatory rates, and their replacement with non-discriminatory rates. This is the proper time to let your U.S. Senator know that you approve equalizing transportation rates for recyclable materials and increased funding for research in methods of re-use.



FLOOD PLAINS CONSERVATION ACT

In late July congressman James Symington announced his sponsorship of the Flood Plains Conservation Act, H.R. 9439. The Symington legislation would "establish a national flood plain policy and authorize the Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with Federal agencies and the States, to encourage the dedication of the Nation's flood plains as natural floodways, to protect, conserve, and restore their natural functions and resources, and for other purposes."

The announcement continues: "The basic purpose of this legislation is to provide alternatives and probably less expensive plans for protection of flood-prone regions. Seemingly, the only choice Congress now can make is additional construction of dams, levees, and channels versus continual flooding of low-lying areas. This bill will provide needed alternatives to current national water development policies.

The Bill has been referred to the Committee on Internal and Insular Affairs. We will watch its progress with interest.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

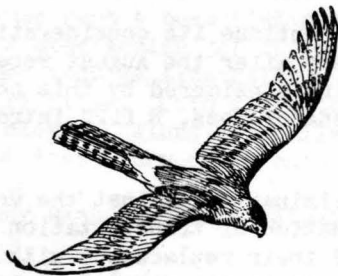
As we noted in the last bulletin, Audubon projects were by no means on holiday during the summer. There follow reports on several of the activities we sponsored. We hope to hear later from some of the recipients of scholarships to summer Audubon camps.

THE NEW PHOTOGRAPHY WALKS

July 15th was an unusually pleasant day for a St. Louis summer and twenty-four camera buffs who met at West Tyson Park made good use of it. Although birds were in evidence, it was the showy wildflowers of midsummer which received the most attention. Partridge pea and Queen Anne's lace were in full bloom, and bellflowers with their 5-pointed starlike blossoms of violet-blue were good close-up subjects. A patch of ten-petaled sunflowers were clumped at the high point of the trail, and Ed Mason's trick of setting off a single blossom with mirror-reflected sunlight got a lot of attention. One of the most beautiful "weeds" of the eastern half of the United States - the trumpet vine - was accorded a lot of shots because of its 5-lobed 3-inch long tube blossoms. The sky, that best of all backgrounds, made a fine foil for the fringed white flowers of starry campion.

Of the 900,000 identified insect species of the world we saw very few. Of the class Arachnida we saw two and felt many more: a long-legged harvester spider (which does not spin a web), ambled along a log; and a tiny web-weaver was awaiting some prey in a layered web. The ones we felt and took home with us were the chiggers!

The second walk was held on August 5 in Rockwoods Reservation. No report was available at time of publication, but the Mason luck held and it was another beautiful day. The third of the series of walks is to be held on September 16 at the Arboretum, Gray Summit. Meet at the main gate at 9:30.



PITZMAN SUMMER PROGRAM



Once again the St. Louis Audubon Society provided instruction about birds as its share in the Pitzman Nature Program of the Missouri Botanical Garden. This summer we met a new group of children each week at the Garden in town. For the second week the children had country experiences at the Arboretum at Gray Summit.

Lennie Criger directed the bird classes, as she has for the past dozen years, ably assisted by Yvonne Balsiger, Rose Ann Bodman and Marilyn Higgins. There were also special demonstrations provided by Frank Erb, Bill Voelker and Mary Wiese. Frank used his clever TV format to tell a well rounded story of birds, illustrated by his own drawings and by mounted specimens.

Bill Voelker, who is part Comanche Indian, brought in live raptors as an added attraction to his priceless display of hawk and eagle plumage. Of particular interest are the ceremonial head dresses which have come to him from his grandmother. It is a special pleasure to have Bill with us since only very recently he was one of the Pitzman pupils himself. Mary Wiese has a varied collection of nests and feathers which she uses to illustrate aspects of bird life.

The classes numbered from 25 to 60 with an age range of about 5 to 12. As always the children seemed extremely enthusiastic about their exposure to birds. To judge by the eager responses of those who had attended in past years they had also learned and remembered a great deal.



PROVIDENCE JUNIOR HIGH NATURE PROGRAM

Bill Brush

It has again been my pleasure to work for and represent the Society in our summer educational project as a Nature Specialist or, as the boys call me, the "Nature Man." Providence Junior High School is a private inner-city corporation designed to provide an education for wards of the Juvenile Court of the City of St. Louis, as well as counseling to help them adjust to life and keep free from run-ins with the law. These boys range in age from 9 to 16 years. The high school is funded by the Department of Justice, and by matching funds that must be raised by the corporation. My expenses and salary were considered matching funds, and entitled them to a larger grant. This type of student is not the easiest to work with, but I enjoy the challenge.

During the summer session there were 49 students, with 7 teachers and 15 assistant teachers. These assistants were generally college students. I visited two days a week for five weeks, with two groups per visit for about an hour each. Working with small groups of seven or less made it easy to have personal contact and give individual attention. Our first subject was Edible Plants, and we sampled those of the neighborhood as an interest-generating activity. It always amazes me, as well as the students, that there are so many "goodies" so close to home. The school is located at Grand and North Market, which is hardly in the middle of the outdoors. Most were reluctant to sample these delights, but converts in many cases were not too hard to make.

The second subject was Owls. A live Barred Owl and a live Great Horned Owl visited the classes with me. The students were at first fearful and hostile, even vowing to "knock his head off if he come too near." These birds were "dangerous and would probably peck you to death, sink their talons into you, or carry you off!" They soon learned these statements were false, and by the end of the class, most of the boys were stroking the owls or letting them perch on their fists. Of course some could not conquer their fear and did not participate even with prodding from their classmates.

The final subject was Nature Games. These were riddles. For example, "What nut is made from cream?" (butternut) "...is a girl's name?" (Hazel) "...is a vegetable?" (peanut)

One group of nine boys and several teachers had the good fortune of making a trip to the Busch Wildlife area. There we saw and discussed the Canada geese at Headquarters Lake, especially those with the orange bands around their necks. We also went to Lake 33 and the area behind it, where the stinging nettle was stinging, and we made plaster casts of the animal tracks we found.

It's a wonderful feeling to see the development of interest in the outdoors in such a group of boys. If even one goes on to develop this interest, the summer will have been worthwhile.

Editor's Note: Here is a letter from the Principal of Providence House. 'Nuff said!"

Dear Mr. Magner,

I would like to thank the Audubon Society for sending Bill Brush to the Providence Educational Center. We are most grateful for your interest and help in providing us with such a great program. Bill Brush is like a Pied Piper with the boys, and he is a really special person providing a superb program.

Sincerely, John de Valcourt, Principal

The Audubon Society of Missouri will hold its Annual Fall Meeting the weekend of October 12, 13 and 14, 1973, at Camp Rising Sun, Lake of the Ozarks State Park. Anyone interested in the enjoyment, study and conservation of our natural heritage is welcomed. Activities of the weekend will include field trips, a Saturday evening program, and the annual business meeting. Participants eager for a complete outdoor weekend may arrive on Friday evening even though no planned activities will take place until Saturday afternoon. Fees are reasonable, food is good, and all you need to bring is your bedding for sleeping on a camp mattress. Those wishing to attend should inform the Campship Director, Mr. Lisle Jeffrey, 1845 Cliff Drive, Columbia, Missouri, 65201.

STATEMENT BY ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY CONCERNING THE L-15
LEVEE PROPOSAL. PUBLIC MEETING CALLED BY KANSAS CITY DIS-
TRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS AT FORTAGE DES SIOUX, MISSOURI,
JULY 19, 1973.

The Executive Board of the St. Louis Audubon Society asks
that the following statement be included in the official
record of the meeting:

1. The L-15 Levee, 47 miles long, situated at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers will have a destructive impact on the natural habitat of animals and birds. Because the area to be protected is within the largest North American flyway of migratory birds, waterfowl in particular, any man-made change in the riparian ecology is detrimental to the already seriously reduced population of ducks and geese. The heavily wooded shorelines are the winter habitat of an endangered species, the Bald eagle, our National Emblem.
2. The area to be enclosed by the proposed levee comprises approximately 37,000 acres, which are used for agriculture and recreation. This is rich alluvial farm land. The reason for its fertility is the frequent flooding of this plain. A levee system would terminate the natural enrichment of the soil from flood deposits. The rich soil of this flood plain should be reserved for agriculture and recreation. For longer than recorded history the flooding of the Nile Valley has annually renewed the fertility of the land, but in the few short years since the completion of the Aswan Dam, productivity of the valley has lagged. The flood plain is an integral part of the river and must be used by the river as a safety valve in times of unusual precipitation.
3. Economically, the high cost of this proposed levee system can never be justified on the basis of the value of crops which the levee is to protect. Farmers who own land in alluvial flood-plains should know that floods are a normal component of their existence. From a national viewpoint, as opposed to that of the present owners, the value of the crops grown on these 37,000 acres is insignificant. Unfortunately, we have not had an opportunity to see and evaluate the details of the cost/benefit ratio information developed for L-15. The summary as presented indicates the proposals are not feasible at 5½%. The 2½% interest rate used in the study is not realistic in 1973, and further indicates that the costs will not be paid by those directly benefited.
4. Congress and the Corps of Engineers should not ignore the Final Report of the National Water Commission, just issued, which recommends that those who benefit directly from levees should bear the cost of construction and maintenance.
5. We have just witnessed the highest flood-crests recorded for the Mississippi River. Yet, the volume of water involved was below that of previous floods. Luna Leopold, Chief Research Hydrologist for the U. S. Geological Survey, predicted in a recent address in St. Louis, that floods of this magnitude can be expected every 10 to 30 years. He pointed out that the severity of the 1973 flood was due to the misguided idea of channelization by building ever more levees restricting the rivers.

6. The area which would be enclosed by the L-15 Levee is already much used for recreational purposes. Metropolitan St. Louis is in dire need of "green-belt" lands, and this land fits ideally into such a concept. We support plans advanced by a number of organizations, which project increased recreational use for this flood plain, with additional public access areas.

7. While the proposed levee is supposed to protect present agricultural land, it is quite obvious that land values would increase enormously as soon as levees are built. It is obvious also, that in the absence of valid zoning laws, residential, commercial and heavy industrial developments could intrude and later totally replace the farms. The natural, recreational possibilities would forever be destroyed while a few individuals would reap large gains. At this time Congress is formulating Land-Use Laws which can be expected to deal with the subject of misuse of flood plains. We urge that no action on the L-15 Levee be taken until the nation and the State of Missouri have formulated much needed Land Use Plans.

CONCLUSION: For the 7 reasons given, the St. Louis Audubon Society opposes the construction of the L-15 Levee, and recommends that the lands lying between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers near their confluence be made a Recreation Area, and that this natural "green-belt" be preserved for the people of Metropolitan St. Louis and the many visitors who want to see the meeting of the two mightiest rivers of the United States.

J. Marshall Wagner

NATIONAL HUNTING AND FISHING DAY CELEBRATION
ROCKWOODS RESERVATION - SEPTEMBER 22

The Missouri Department of Conservation has invited the St. Louis Audubon Society to participate in the National Hunting and Fishing Day Celebration. We have suggested our exhibit and demonstration theme be "HUNTING WITH A CAMERA". We will have one end of the front porch of the Headquarters Building at Rockwoods for our set-up. Activities are scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. on that Saturday and last until 5:00 p.m.

Tentatively the Audubon Exhibit will consist of photographs, equipment, a nature photography set-up and photographers to give "how to" instructions to the visiting public. We'll need some talented poster and sign makers; people to distribute Audubon literature; some of our fine nature photographers to show "how they do it"; and some friendly Auduboners to talk to the visitors. Want to be a part of this public service effort of the St. Louis Audubon Society? Drop a postcard or note to Ed and Lee Mason, 8410 Madeline Drive, St. Louis 63114.

AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The prize award show for those who participated in last season's workshops will be held on Tuesday, October 2, at 7:30 P.M. at the St. Louis County Library, 1640 S. Lindbergh. Slides will be shown and the prizes announced. Everyone is invited to come and see what our talented nature photographers have produced.

On November 14, at 7:30 P.M. at the new Howard Johnson Motor Lodge, 1200 South Lindbergh, there will be an indoor get-together for photographers. At this meeting plans will be made for a Nature Photography Section of the St. Louis Audubon Society. If you have a camera and nature is your thing don't miss this meeting.



SWEET BIRD IN THE HAND

William Caldwell

Reprinted with permission
from the Vineyard Gazette
Edgartown, Massachusetts

Over my 6 a. m. ration of tea and Loren Eiseley I heard the muffled tap at the window, and glanced up in time to see the bird fall to the deck of the house. A little crescent of feather spun after it. For a moment its legs twitched spasmodically - then the bird lay still. I tiptoed out - in the presence of death, sh-h-h - and tilted the tiny body into the palm of my hand. It was not dead. Yet.

Not often but too often over the years birds have hurled themselves against our windows and, neck broken, died forthwith. We wish we could warn them off, but my problem just then wasn't accident prevention. It was treatment and rehabilitation. Or funeral arrangements.

I wasn't sure this sparrow-sized casualty could take any handling at all. Its eye was bright and it was breathing, but it seemed to be in shock, and shock has a way of going out of control, irreversibly. I put the bird in a cereal bowl; inverted a kitchen sieve over it; and poured a modest hooker of brandy - Courvoisier, V. S. O. P. - into the bowl. It took a slug and shuddered. Sip, I said, and it did sip agreeably and I made another cup of tea and consulted my books.

It was an indigo bunting, the texts agreed: jet black in shadow, its feather structure glowed iridescent blue and green in the light of the hooded kitchen lamp. (Wasn't its breathing slower now? Was the cognac the indicated therapy or poison?) But when the ornithologists tried to tell me how to identify an indigo bunting by its song the consensus went Democratic, 1972.

Peterson says it goes sweet-sweet, chew-chew, etc., and I don't believe it. The only bird that says etc., etc., is the female of the house sparrow.

Alan Cruickshank's version: sweet-sweet, chip-chip, chee-chee, sweet-sweet, eat-eat. Or, to put it another way, fire-fire, where-where, here, let's put it out. You wonder what a bunting says in German or Russian.

Frank M. Chapman: July-July, summer-summer's here, morning, noontide evening, list to me.
Arthur A. Allen: sweet-sweet, where-where, here-here, see-it, see-it.

The bunting had turned its burnished head and tucked it under its wing - as touching an act as there may be in such nature as I know, this trusting withdrawal, so familiar and so dear in the very small - and slept.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit - thou wast not made for death, immortal bird - to be sentimental over birds is to be silly, and I know it, but I found myself thinking about this merry little animal and its mousy mate out there somewhere, about worry and loneliness and heartbreak and songs that repeat themselves sweetly for a last time. A last time. Is that so exclusively human a concept, or can a bunting's tiny brain and fast-fluttering heart sense in sudden silence a void that will ache forever? "Thou'lt come no more," cries Lear over his daughter's body, "never, never, never, never, never!" The two-syllable cadence is pure bunting, albeit the mousy mate would not know the words.

The bird in the dish woke, glared about and leaped up and held with its claws to the mesh walls of the sieve, and I took it outside and let it go. It took off in a rainbow haze of booze and flickered away saying beer, beer, toute suite, here dear, and also I can explain everything. When he got home he caught hell, I suppose. Once the pressure of anxiety is relieved suddenly, a girl is apt to blow up and say things she doesn't mean, such as etc., etc., etc.

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GASCONADE RIVER HEARINGS

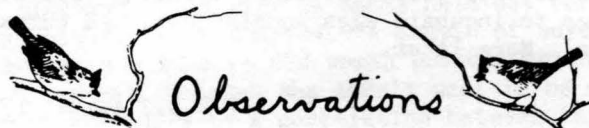
The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation of the Department of the Interior is holding a series of public information meetings concerning the federal-state study of the Gasconade River and its major tributaries. One is to be held in St. Louis at the Visitor Center in the Gateway Arch on September 28, 1973 at 7:30 P.M. We urge all those who are interested to attend.

BUILDING INTEREST IN BIRDS
Herald M. Doxsee

One seldom sees such interest displayed - a hundred or more elementary school children, eyes glued to the chart of common birds, (drawn and colored by the speaker), so quiet that the fall of a pin could be detected. No, they were not being entertained by a movie star. It was just a talk by a man who has made a hobby of birds. He may talk for an hour and still the children will watch and listen with unabated interest and ask for more.

During the past year Frank J. Erb, retired art buyer and Audubon member, has been talking to hundreds of elementary school children in the St. Louis area. He interjects thought-provoking questions here and there in his remarks and the children come right back with comments and more questions. Here are some typical questions youngsters have thrown at Mr. Erb: Why is a nest always round?; How does a bird lay an egg?; How long does a bird live?; Can a worm see a robin?; Is a bat a bird?; Where does the word 'bird' come from?; How do they know when a bird is about to be extinct?; How can I feed a baby bird?; Where did the birds get their names?; Where do birds go when they die?; What do birds do for us?; Can a bird live with one leg?; Why do birds dive-bomb you? In three separate schools pupils asked about the Eskimo curlew, which is now extinct.

Not only do the children ask questions, but they deluge Mr. Erb with their own creations of birds. Certainly, this man's experience in communicating with school children about birds suggests an activity for others who are knowledgeable about birds. They could do a great service and enjoy many pleasant hours as they catch the bright-eyed responses from children who are anxious to learn what the bird-lover has already discovered.



St. Louis Area Summer Birding
J. Earl Comfort

Around June first the expected scarcity of birds was quite evident when the passing of the hordes of migrant warblers and other migrants left us with only our summer and permanent resident species. The departure of our exciting and dependable species caused the usual local summer lull in birding activity.

The birders who are afield come rain, shine, or hot weather enjoyed such highlights as a nesting pair of Henslow's sparrows at the Busch Wildlife Area in St. Charles County, young and adults of the king and Virginia rails elsewhere, and nesting least bitterns near Creve Coeur Lake in St. Louis County. Most noticeable was the extreme scarcity of the usually rather common great blue herons. But cattle egrets, snowy egrets and yellow-crowned night herons drew the birders to the Illinois Mississippi River levees below Jefferson Barracks bridge where the more common members of the heron family were also listed, including the young of the year. The levees also yielded fish crows.

In mid-July the expected shorebird migration was in evidence, with these interesting and confusing birds gradually increasing in numbers and number of species. The nine upland plovers at St. Charles County airfield on one trip made the day a memorable one. As of August 15 no exceptionally rare shorebirds had turned up among the 21 species listed during the season.

When the official AOU checklist book appears in the near future some of the names of birds will be changed, some species will be lumped, others split. Unfortunately for the lister, there will be far more lumping than splitting. For instance, the upland plover will be the upland sandpiper. Considering its appearance, this makes sense.



REPORT FROM NEW GUINEA
Mary C. Wiese
(Excerpts from letters
continued from
summer Bulletin)



8 a.m., August 17, Wabag, N. G.

Now we are at the very attractive Wabag Motel. It's only eighteen months old and the manager has been here for only two weeks, not an unusual situation we've found. The cabins, which look somewhat like African rondavals, are built of native stone with thatched roofs. The bathrooms are equipped with lovely bathtubs, the first we've had since the New Hebrides. There's just one problem; There's no water for anything but very limited drinking and one is encouraged to do that out of bottles or cans. The drouth has really caught up with us, but we're all slightly punch drunk by now so no one really complains. There are barrels of river water out front, and eventually the very efficient help will come and flush the toilets, etc. We've had the best service of the trip at this, our farthest outpost from civilization. The most welcome touch of all was being served coffee right away at breakfast. The hotels here simply can't believe that anyone could be gauche enough to want coffee during a meal, any meal, nor that Americans drink water. Nobody else does.

I'm listening for the sound of two small planes that are to fly up from Mt. Hagen to take us to the Baiyer River Sanctuary. These are all short distances on the map, but as you know by now, they take forever by road. The sound I'm hearing right now is the song of a marvelous bird called Willie Wagtail. He's one of Australia's special birds, but he has also been with us everywhere through the islands. He looks like a long slender junco with white spots and a long tail. When he lands he swings his rear end from side to side in a sort of slow shimmy. He stutters down the scale when he sings, but never quite drops the last shoe. We have seen their tiny cup nests several times, stuck on slanting tree branches. Most of the bird hangs out, but they manage to incubate eggs nonetheless, and certainly maintain their numbers. There are the planes. More later.

1 p.m., August 17, Baiyer River, N. G.

It occurs to me that it may seem strange that I can be writing a letter in the hotel room and be ready to get on a plane when I hear the sound of the motors. The answer is that in the Highlands almost all there is in a small settlement like this is an airstrip, some kind of lodging, a few shops and the district office. We came up here because of the beautiful countryside and the interesting birds en route, but primarily because the Wabag Motel was the only place near Baiyer River that had room for us.

That was another thrilling flight down here. The same two planes that took us to Kundiawa flew us along the Wahgi River valley and across the ridge practically at eye level again, then into the valley of the Baiyer River. We've come down to 3500 feet from 8000; at one pass on the way up to Wabag we were at 9500. This is a sanctuary of several hundred acres of rain forest with a great number of caged birds plus numerous wild birds. There is a constant cacophony of sound, but the wild birds are terribly hard to see because of the heavy foliage. We sat for quite a while around the display area of the magnificent bird of paradise and could hear him calling, but could never locate him. He sounds like a rapid twang across piano strings. We have seen the lesser bird of paradise several times and yesterday found the ribbon-tail at 8000 feet. So we have now seen five species of birds of paradise and heard several others. Their calls have a very resonant quality and are a constant part of the forest sound. The adult males all have display trees which they use in early morning and late evening. The natives search out these trees and set their traps near them. Yesterday one of the guides showed us an intricate snare made of saplings with a vine noose. It was baited with fruit and so cleverly camouflaged that we walked right by it.

I'm sitting in one of three VW buses (new transport, new drivers) after another of those huge meals that we seem to absorb without gaining weight. We must bounce around so in the buses and use up so much energy that even barbecued steak and sauerkraut, on top of the usual breakfast chops don't seem to increase the waistline. It's the heat of the day and the forest is becoming quiet, giving me a chance to catch up. I've pages of notes; so brace yourself!

We started early yesterday morning from the town of Mt. Hagen (6000 feet) in dense fog. It was beautiful to watch the curtain of clouds rising off Mt. Hagen (12,500 feet) itself, and

the blue sky slowly becoming visible between the peaks. By the time we had been out an hour the sky had cleared and we were back to the cloudlessness we have had each morning. It was cold and crisp, but it seemed as though the higher we went the fewer clothes people wore and the fancier what they did wear became. Aside from a few shawls and an occasional tote bag pulled over the shoulders, the only form of insulation we saw on women was a small tree kangaroo skin draped around the neck with the tail hanging down between the breasts.

The men's costumes had a much wider range of choice. Here are the notes I made on one of them: cap of black cassowary feathers banded with possum fur, with a large hawk feather sticking straight up out of the center. Around the neck, a chain from which was suspended a miniature Venetian blind of bamboo slats, like a dangle of marksmanship medals. This is an indication of wealth, each slat standing for a lip shell or a pig owned by a man, or owed to him by somebody else. Around the waist, many strands of insulated electric wire instead of the usual woven belt. From this were suspended a colorful bunch of croton leaf arsegras, the usual fiber and possum fur apron, and on one side a jade stone knife with a woven grass handle and on the other, an umbrella. How's that for swank?

As we came closer to Wabag we began to see the Wigmen. This is a local fashion caprice consisting of a large headpiece, slightly like a military tricorne, made entirely of human hair matted together. Apparently the women and children supply it for the man of the house.

The men in this district are very handsome with long faces, hawk noses and fairly full beards. They look rather like very dark We-Three-Kings-of-Orient-Are and there is a theory that Arab traders were in these mountains hundreds of years ago, accounting for the hawk face. The women look scrunched up and a little scared (just cold, perhaps), but the children are an absolute joy. They all come rushing down to the road to line up and watch our parade -- obviously they can hear our vehicles laboring up the mountains from miles away and we are AN EVENT. It's a little like going to the station to watch the trains go by in the olden days.

In the Highlands the people are even more interested in watching us than we are in them, and they love having their pictures taken with no hands held out for coins. At the schools they tend to line up rigidly waiting to be snapped. A couple of boys went into a gorilla act to attract attention and across the road an old woman bounced up and down frantically sort of yodeling and pointing to herself because she didn't want to be missed. We heard several people yodel in greeting. Maybe there is a correlation between this sound and high places? Since I have no camera I often aim my binoculars at people because I don't want them to think I'm ignoring them. Many of the men want to shake hands with us, but only one woman was so brave, and she also said, "Hello" instead of the Pidgin greeting, "apanun" (afternoon). We created a slight mob scene when we started walking from our broken down bus yesterday, with increasing numbers of people following us as we progressed down the road.

Just one more comment about people. In Wabag this morning the airport had the usual line-up of people to watch our departure, but there was one very different group, a file of prisoners in faded red and white striped laplaps (like sarongs). I think I wrote about the newspaper article which told about the clan warfare near Wabag over land. The district officer who flew on the plane with us said that undoubtedly some of these men were involved in the recent trouble. He said the skirmishes, usually without guns, take place in the hills and are comparable to the old Scottish clan warfare. The groups are too small to be called tribes.

Now we'll go on to the daily crop report. These valleys and hillsides seem to be very fertile. I mentioned the little squares of yams in the Chimbu district. Toward Wabag the pattern changes and the individual patches are in low rounded hillocks, looking from the air like a pan of half raised biscuits. As commercial crops they have coffee and also pyrethrin daisies for insecticides. The district office provides crop information, etc., like our extension service. This is the burning season and every night we see fires where they are burning off the forest for new land, or burning off the kunai grass since the young shoots can be used as cattle feed.

I continue to be amazed by the stateside species of flowers we see. Yesterday more cosmos, lupine, blue flax, a white violet with pink stripes, St. Johnswort, several pea family plants and wild growing zinnias. But there are also Flame of the Forest and many other brilliant flowered vines. And the fruits are unbelievable, many of them probably inedible by man. Len bought one that was new to us from a boy along the way -- banana passion fruit. It grew in a cluster like a hand of bananas, but on the inside looked like a yellow pomegranate. Well liked by those who like it. Not I.

calendar.....



September 15, Saturday, 8:00 A.M. AUDUBON NATURE WALK at Arboretum, Gray Summit. Meet at main gate.
September 15, Saturday, 8:00 A.M. WGNSS BUSCH WILDLIFE AREA BIRDING. Meet at Headquarters Lake.
September 16, Sunday, 9:30 A.M. ST. LOUIS AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY WALK - The Arboretum, Gray Summit. Meet on parking lot inside main gate. Bring lunch.
September 22, Saturday, 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. NATIONAL HUNTING AND FISHING DAY CELEBRATION, Rockwoods Reservation. See notice on page
September 23, Sunday, 8:00 A.M. AUDUBON FIELD TRIP at Tyson Park. Take Times Beach ramp off of Highway 66 (or I-44) Meet at entrance.
September 28, Friday, 8:15 P.M. AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM at the Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Rd. The Land That No One Wanted, Lyle K. Moss
September 30, Sunday, 10:00 A.M. to dusk FALL NATURE OUTING AND WORKSHOPS at Pickering's Sunny Ranch. See p. 1.
October 2, Tuesday, 8:00 P.M. AUDUBON PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP PRIZE AWARD SHOW. St. Louis County Library, 1640 S. Lindbergh.
October 12, 13, 14 MISSOURI STATE AUDUBON SOCIETY FALL MEETING, Camp Rising Sun, Lake of the Ozarks State Park. See notice p.
October 19, Friday, 8:15 P.M. AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM at Ethical Society, On the Trail of the Arctic Char, Peter Maslowski

WEBSTER GROVES NATURE STUDY SOCIETY Midweek birding trips will continue as usual. For information on Wednesday trips call Sallie Phillips, 821-2216. For Thursday trips, call Helen Bowman, 531-1748 or Rose Ann Bodman, 961-2583.

AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS For further information about Audubon trips call Earl Hath, 965-8642.

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Audubon Society held August 21, 1973, the following resolution was passed unanimously and sent to Mr. Harry Wiggins, Chief Counsel, Missouri Public Service Commission:

Whereas, Union Electric Company of St. Louis plans to construct an electric transmission line northward through Jefferson County for the Rush Island Power Plant to the Tyson Substation and

Whereas, the construction, maintenance and existence of such a transmission line will cause irreversible damage to an area of unique natural beauty accessible to the residents of metropolitan St. Louis, many acres of which have designated as a nature preserve for forty years,

Whereas, the proposed right of way will pass directly over Rice Cave which, according to J. H. Bretz (Caves of Missouri, Missouri Geological Survey and Water Resources, 1956) contains a series of slightly en echelon slots or overlaps, all to the left, unique in his experience. Another feature unique among Missouri caves is the growth of secondary gypsum crystal flowers on the cave walls,

Be it resolved: that the Missouri Public Service Commission investigate and hold hearings to determine the necessity for constructing this specific transmission line; and to consider the use of an alternate route such as the existing north-south right of way.

Return Address:

St. Louis Audubon Society
Mrs. Jay G. Rice, Executive Secretary
240 Blackmer Pl.
St. Louis, Mo. 63119

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